

bridge into the river, and be forgotten as completely as if we had never been. This is an interesting programme of proceedings, and possible in daily life, but highly probable in fiction. Read and Wilkie Collins will be truly thankful for the original suggestions therein contained, and to which these red-hot, itchy fictionists may apply, seeing they are not "entered in the office of the Minister of Agriculture" as patents. This desultory narrative is a life picture, and curbs a free fancy by fruitful facts. Cast-iron rules of truthful incidents have a "pent up Utica." To have stirring and impossible scenes in field and flood, with a horror or two thrown in, will pass a dull story; to preserve a hero, hanging by the heels, in a worse position than Tantalus, from one week's end to another, and his friends also in suspensory torture, seven days at a time, as to his fate, with "to be continued" for a *solatium*; to keep the *denouement* carefully covered up in the creel of generalities and mythical lore, until page 180 is reached, and then, without any regard to the reader's feelings, "pop goes the weasel," is not life, but ideality gone mad, with "emotional insanity" for a reader, and a *claquer*. I make this charge deliberately, with the prospect of being publicly guillotined for my pains. The waggon had in it a young lady,—from the city? (keep cool, now, and don't be in a hurry); not at all, but from a neighbouring settlement. Is she pretty? That is a matter for discussion. We are told by sages that there is an ideal model of beauty which priest and pagan, Jew and Christian, man and woman, wise and ignorant, must accept, by intuition, as angelic and perfect. If our minds are unwarped by habit or custom, the verdict must be universally unanimous, just as all bushel measures must, in strict honesty, contain only as many cubic inches as the patriarchal measure in the British Museum. I enter a demurrer against this view, and may argue it out at some future time. The Scot was full of "soft sawder" as well as "human nature," not to say a spice of philosophy, when he said "Gin ye wis a' o' my way o' thinkin, ye wid a' be gane clean daft after my Maggie." This young lady whom we have neglected so long had beauty, no doubt. To me she had the face and figure of a true *Raphaelitic* Madonna. I don't ask you to endorse this ebullition of sentiment, because you never saw her, and possibly you would not then; but I'll thrust the matter home to you, and ask you to sit down under the apple-tree, "'tween the gloamin' and the mirk," and construct out of the imagery of your